



What is Take Pride in America®?

Take Pride in America® is a national partnership program aimed at increasing volunteer service on America's public lands. It is the goal of Take Pride to empower volunteers from every corner of America to maintain and enhance our natural, cultural, and historical sites.

Take Pride encourages citizen stewardship through an innovative public awareness campaign and an interactive website that showcases volunteer opportunities at natural and cultural sites.

What is the history of the Take Pride in America program?

The Take Pride in America program was established in 1985 by Interior Secretary Donald Hodel in response to the increase in vandalism on public lands. He sought to increase awareness among the public that abusers of public lands and public resources were in essence robbing the American public of a shared birthright. President Ronald Reagan supported the Secretary's message and proclaimed that, "All Americans should take pride in their outstanding public lands and historic sites that belong to everyone."

The program was reintroduced in 2003 under the direction of Interior Secretary Gale Norton with the goal of continuing to "inspire a whole new generation of volunteers, who enthusiastically put their patriotism to work in protecting our national parks, wildlife refuges, public lands, and other natural treasures."

How does Take Pride inspire citizen stewardship?

Take Pride was originally created as a public awareness campaign and that continues to be the focus of the program. By increasing awareness of our public lands, Take Pride hopes to inspire all Americans to become good stewards of our shared spaces.

In 2005 a nationwide public service announcement campaign was launched by Take Pride and its partners. The PSA features Take Pride's national spokesman, award winning director and actor, Clint Eastwood. The PSA reached 25.5 million viewers in 120 markets, including all of the top twenty media markets in the country.

The print PSA has been featured in mainstream publications like TIME Magazine, Harper's Bazaar, American Park Network Guide, and National Geographic Adventure. The Take Pride message has also reached 6.75 million people in state park Adventure Guides printed in California, New York, South Carolina, and Utah.

How can I get involved in Take Pride in America?

There are many ways individuals, groups, organizations, and corporations can become involved with the Take Pride program. Take Pride's interactive website, www.takepride.gov, features a searchable database of short-term and long-term volunteer opportunities on public lands. These opportunities are a great way for individuals to become involved in their local communities.

Groups can also host volunteer events in partnership with local, state and federal lands. The Take Pride website offers project planning assistance and resources for volunteer coordinators.

Corporations can also get involved. Take Pride in America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, therefore contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals are tax deductible. In addition to financial contributions, Take Pride also welcomes in-kind donations, and other partnering opportunities through events and cross-promotion activities. For more information, please contact the Take Pride in America office at (202) 208-5848.

What is the Take Pride Schools program?

The Take Pride Schools program was launched in the fall of 2005 to introduce a new generation to volunteerism and create future stewards of our public lands. The first Take Pride School event was held at Carmel River School in Carmel, California, and participants included then-Secretary Gale Norton and the Take Pride national spokesman, Clint Eastwood. Students participated in a wetlands restoration project at the Carmel River State Park and partnered with the California Conservation Corps and other area volunteers.

To be designated as a Take Pride School, a school must commit to participating in two Take Pride volunteer events each year benefiting public lands. Participation can be by an entire school, a class, or even an after-school club. Designated schools are eligible for national awards, as well as other recognition.

Currently sixty-seven schools and 10,000 students participate in the Take Pride schools program. With an increased focus on youth and volunteering, it is the goal of Take Pride to increase the number of participating schools to 300 by the end of 2007.

How does Take Pride empower volunteers?

Volunteers on our public lands enjoy the many benefits that come with volunteering. Empowerment comes through the ability to search for volunteer opportunities locally while becoming a part of a nationwide network of volunteers. The necessary tools volunteers need to join in on already existing opportunities exist through the Take Pride website, but there are also resources for those who wish to begin projects of their own. Project planning assistance and other resources are also available through the website to individuals and organizations wishing to participate in the Take Pride program.

What are public lands?

Nearly one third of the United States, or 900 million acres, are considered public lands. These lands are more than national parks; they include forests, beaches, wildlife refuges, deserts, gardens, historic sites, state parks and neighborhood playgrounds.

Why should I volunteer?

There are many benefits to volunteering. Not only do the lands and spaces that you work to improve benefit from volunteer efforts, but volunteers personally benefit as well. Volunteering is a great social activity and according to research, it can improve your physical and mental health. Volunteers enjoy an increase in self esteem, lower risk of serious illness, and enjoy a heightened sense of well being.

In addition to these benefits, Take Pride seeks to recognize volunteers for their outstanding efforts. Public lands volunteers are eligible for Presidential Volunteer Service awards, as well as Take Pride in America Hours of Service awards. Take Pride also hosts an annual national awards ceremony in Washington, DC that recognizes individuals, organizations, corporations and others for their commitment to the mission and goals of the Take Pride program.

For more information, please contact:

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